

1 **DURHAM-CHAPEL HILL-CARRBORO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION BOARD**

2 **11 March 2020**

3
4 **MINUTES OF MEETING**

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6 The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization Board met on March
7 11, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. in the Chapel Hill Public Library. The following people were in
8 attendance:

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10	Wendy Jacobs (Chair)	Durham County
11	Jenn Weaver (Vice Chair)	Town of Hillsborough
12	Renée Price (Member)	Orange County
13	Vernetta Alston (Member)	City of Durham
14	Damon Seils (Member)	Town of Carrboro
15	Ellen Reckhow (Member)	GoTriangle
16	Steve Schewel (Alternate)	City of Durham
17	Lydia Lavelle (Alternate)	Town of Carrboro
18	Michael Parker (Alternate)	Town of Chapel Hill
19		
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21	David Keilson	NCDOT, Division 5
22	Richard Hancock	NCDOT, Division 5
23	Patrick Wilson	NCDOT, Division 7
24	Bryan Kluchar	NCDOT, Division 8
25	Julie Bogle	NCDOT, TPD
26	John Grant	NCDOT, Traffic Operations
27	Nish Trivedi	Orange County
28	Sean Egan	City of Durham
29	Bill Judge	City of Durham
30	Evan Tenenbaum	City of Durham
31	Tina Moon	Town of Carrboro
32	Brooke Ganser	Durham County Planning
33	Craig Benedict	Orange County
34	Joe Geigle	FHWA
35	John Hodges-Copple	Triangle J Council of Governments
36	Hank Graham	Research Triangle Foundation
37	Katharine Eggleston	GoTriangle
38	Meg Scully	GoTriangle
39	Jay Heikes	GoTriangle
40	Shelley Curran	GoTriangle
41	Cha'ssam Anderson	University of North Carolina
42	Patrick McDonough	HDR
43		
44	Felix Nwoko	DCHC MPO
45	Andy Henry	DCHC MPO
46	Aaron Cain	DCHC MPO

47	Robert Jahn	DCHC MPO
48	Dale McKeel	City of Durham/DCHC MPO
49		
50	Heidi Perry	Resident
51	Mike Waldroup	Resident

52
53 Quorum Count: 8 of 10 Voting Members
54
55

56 Chair Wendy Jacobs called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A roll call was performed. The
57 Voting Members and Alternate Voting Members of the DCHC MPO Board were identified and are
58 indicated above. Chair Wendy Jacobs reminded everyone to sign-in using the sign-in sheet that was
59 being circulated.

60 Damon Seils made a motion to excuse Pam Hemminger and Charlie Reece from the March 11,
61 2020 DCHC MPO Meeting. Ellen Reckhow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

62 **PRELIMINARIES:**

63 **2. Ethics Reminder**

64 Chair Wendy Jacobs read the Ethics Reminder and asked if there were any known conflicts of
65 interest with respect to matters coming before the MPO Board and requested that if there were any
66 identified during the meeting for them to be announced. There were no known conflicts identified by
67 the MPO Board Members. Chair Wendy Jacobs stated that, per state law, all MPO Board Members and
68 Alternates are required to file a statement of economic interest and real estate disclosure form by April
69 15, 2020.

70 **3. Adjustments to the Agenda**

71 Ellen Reckhow recommended making provisions to meet remotely due to the threat of COVID
72 19. Aaron Cain responded that he would look through the DCHC MPO bylaws for provisions to meet
73 remotely and would put it on the April 8 DCHC MPO Board Meeting agenda. There was discussion
74 about allowing meeting remotely linked to a declaration of emergency at the state or local level.

75 **4. Public Comments**

76 There were no comments from the public.

77 **5. Directives to Staff**

78 Renee Price requested a list of MPO Board Members and Alternates who have not yet signed
79 the statement of economic interest and real estate disclosure. Aaron Cain responded that he will email a
80 list of members who have not yet signed the disclosure statement to the MPO Board.

81 **CONSENT AGENDA:**82 **6. February 12, 2020 MPO Board Meeting Minutes**

83 There was no discussion of the February 12, 2020 MPO Board Meeting Minutes.

84 Renee Price made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Damon Seils seconded the
85 motion. The motion passed unanimously.

86 **ACTION ITEMS:**

87

88 **7. FY20 Unified Planning Work Program Amendment #2**89 **Felix Nwoko, LPA Staff**

90 Felix Nwoko stated that Amendment #2 to the FY2020 Unified Planning Work Program
91 (UPWP) proposes to de-obligate a portion of Planning (PL) funds programmed for the Triangle
92 Bikeway Study. Chair Wendy Jacobs and Felix Nwoko discussed that the de-obligated funds will be
93 carried over to the FY21 UPWP, and will be discussed in the next agenda item.

94 Ellen Reckhow made a motion to approve the FY20 Unified Planning Work Program
95 Amendment #2. Vice Chair Jenn Weaver seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

96 **8. Revision to the Approved 2021 Unified Planning Work Program**97 **Felix Nwoko, LPA Staff**

98 Felix Nwoko stated that this revision is necessary to incorporate carry over funds from
99 FY2020 UPWP Amendment 2. Felix Nwoko added that the revised document includes resolutions and
100 Title VI Assurance supporting the proposed revision to the FY2021 UPWP.

101 Michael Parker made a motion to approve the revision and accompanying resolutions. Ellen
102 Reckhow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

103 **9. SPOT 6 Candidate Project List Public Hearing**
104 **Aaron Cain, LPA Staff**

105 Aaron Cain stated that the deadline to submit Strategic Transportation Prioritization (SPOT) 6
106 projects is May 1, 2020. Aaron Cain added that there are four modes in which to submit projects:
107 highway, transit, bicycle/pedestrian (bike/ped), and rail. Aaron Cain continued that the list has
108 already been released for public comment. Chair Wendy Jacobs opened and closed the public
109 meeting with there being no comment from the public.

110 Ellen Reckhow and Aaron Cain discussed the Cole Mill Road Extension (#14) submission under
111 the highway project submission list. Andy Henry stated that it was added to the 2045 Metropolitan
112 Transportation Plan (MTP) in Amendment #2. Aaron Cain and Ellen Reckhow discussed safety and
113 congestion issues located in northwest Durham that were meant to be addressed with the Cole Mill
114 Road Extension submission.

115 Ellen Reckhow and Aaron Cain also discussed the American Tobacco Trail Tunnel in
116 Downtown submission (#6) under the bike/ped submission list. There were discussions about
117 north/south connectivity in downtown Durham, and safety concerns related to crossing railroad
118 lines. Aaron Cain added that the cost is estimated at approximately \$10M and scored well in SPOT 5,
119 but not well enough to receive SPOT funding. Ellen Reckhow and Aaron Cain discussed that certain
120 SPOT 6 submission projects could help infrastructure issues relating to the Commuter Rail Transit or
121 other transit projects.

122 Chair Wendy Jacobs asked what the best language to use for the facilities dedicated to
123 cyclists and pedestrians that run parallel to roads. There was discussion that sidepath and multi-use
124 path are different terms for the same facility as described above, and protected bike lanes are

125 facilities that are located on a road but include a vertical separation such as a bollard. Bryan Kluchar
126 stated that the Complete Streets Program uses the term sidepath.

127 Damon Seils and Dale McKeel discussed that NCDOT has reported that they are considering
128 projects that include vertical separations for protected bike lanes on a case by case basis. There was
129 discussion about how vertical separations are justified and accepted by the SPOT office. Aaron Cain
130 stated that each jurisdiction informs MPO staff about which facility they prefer for each project, and
131 NCDOT will then score individual project submissions accordingly. Nish Trivedi discussed the
132 response of the NCDOT to provide funding for bike or side paths as they relate to highway projects.
133 Chair Wendy Jacobs and Ellen Reckhow discussed consistency among projects, but also allowing for
134 specificity for individual projects to meet particular needs.

135 Aaron Cain stated that only 4% of the \$60M at the Division 5 level was dedicated to non-
136 highway projects in SPOT 5 and none of it went to bike/ped projects because the available funding
137 was allocated to transit projects. Aaron Cain stated he has been coordinating with Divisions 5, 7, and
138 8 on highway project submissions for SPOT 6. Aaron Cain added that he has been in discussions with
139 the Rail Division concerning project submissions for SPOT 6. Chair Wendy Jacobs requested that
140 acronyms be identified in the SPOT 6 submission documents.

141 There was discussion about the need to specify electric buses in the SPOT 6 submission list.
142 Aaron Cain and Chair Wendy Jacobs discussed that electric buses are more expensive and require
143 additional infrastructure. Damon Seils and Aaron Cain discussed that the associated transit agency or
144 jurisdiction is involved in submitting projects to MPO staff. Aaron Cain stated that he will follow-up
145 with transit agencies to verify preferences for electric or non-electric vehicles. Michael Parker and
146 Aaron Cain discussed SPOT scoring for electric versus non-electric vehicles. Michael Parker and
147 Renee Price discussed alternative modes of funding to assist project submissions. Sean Egan stated
148 that GoDurham has purchased electric buses with the assistance from federal funding sources. Sean

149 Egan stated that future plans including using other federal funding programs to purchase additional
150 electric buses. Jay Heikes added that it will be necessary to provide infrastructure facilities that
151 accommodate different types of electric buses. Chair Wendy Jacobs requested adding information to
152 a future DCHC MPO Board meeting about Volkswagen transit funds.

153 Ellen Reckhow made a motion to approve the SPOT 6 Candidate Project List, and to allow
154 minor revisions by the Chair and Vice Chair. Damon Seils seconded the motion. The motion passed
155 unanimously.

156 **10. FY20 Durham Transit Work Plan Amendment - CRT Study**

157 **Katharine Eggleston, GoTriangle**

158 **Aaron Cain, LPA Staff**

159 Aaron Cain stated that action items #10 and #11 will be presented together.

160 Katharine Eggleston stated that GoTriangle has been studying the approximately 37-mile route
161 for the Commuter Rail Transit (CRT) project from Durham to Garner. Katherine Eggleston added that
162 GoTriangle identified another scenario for a route running from Durham to Clayton, if Johnston County
163 agrees to contribute funding for the next phase of the project. Katharine Eggleston identified New Starts
164 as a federal funding source for the upcoming phase of study. Katherine Eggleston stated that either
165 route would have 20 weekday roundtrips with 8-2-8-2 service. Katherine Eggleston identified evaluation
166 as of the railroad infrastructure improvements to include adding one additional track to the current rail
167 corridor. Kathrine Eggleston stated that evaluation of potential risk will also be crucial to the CRT.
168 Katherine Eggleston stated that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) categorize risk by: project
169 requirements, design, market, and construction. Katharine Eggleston stated that building consensus
170 among partners and stakeholders will be essential to a successful project. Katharine Eggleston discussed
171 key focus areas including; local engagement, railroad buy-in, capacity building, FTA funding eligibility,
172 and a cost share agreement.

173 Katharine Eggleston stated that funding for the CRT in the Durham Work Plan is currently listed
174 at \$465,000 but GoTriangle is requesting an additional \$2.235M in order to fulfill the \$2.7M of the cost
175 share balance with Wake County.

176 Steve Schewel asked about the timeline for the federal funding process. Katharine Eggleston
177 responded that the next phase of study would be approximately 12-18 months, and then it will be
178 decided whether or not to proceed to the implementation phase.

179 Chair Wendy Jacobs asked about design risks. Katharine Eggleston stated that the North Carolina
180 Railroad (NCRR) owns a 200-foot wide corridor and a second track would need to be added. Katharine
181 Eggleston continued that areas such the downtown areas of Durham and Cary would have complexities
182 due to issues such as grade crossings, low clearance bridges, and urban development. Katharine
183 Eggleston added that an additional risk factor would be associated with community engagement and
184 buy-in. Chair Wendy Jacobs and Katharine Eggleston stated that a community engagement plan is
185 scheduled to be drafted during a 60-day period following the signing of the MOU.

186 Steve Schewel stated that he sent a letter to Shelley Curran, President and CEO of GoTriangle,
187 which stated his concerns for the CRT in the City of Durham. Katharine Eggleston responded that
188 GoTriangle is in the process of developing a plan and schedule for the engagement process for the City
189 of Durham and Durham County. Michael Parker suggested broadening stakeholder groups to include
190 chambers of commerce. Ellen Reckhow added comments from a public engagement meeting she
191 attended reflected distrust due to the discontinuation of the Durham-Orange Light Rail Transit (DORLT)
192 project. Shelley Curran stated that GoTriangle has hired a consulting firm to develop a comprehensive
193 stakeholder engagement plan due to its importance for the CRT project. Ellen Reckhow and Shelley
194 Curran discussed that GoTriangle plans to present the plan to the MPO Board in May 2020. Chair Wendy
195 Jacobs and Shelley Curran discussed that, per the MOU, the agreements with impacted cities must be
196 executed within 60 days after the MOU is signed. Vernetta Alston, Shelley Curran and Aaron Cain

197 discussed Engage Durham's involvement in the comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan. Steve
198 Schewel and Katharine Eggleston discussed the working relationship between GoTriangle staff and the
199 City of Durham staff and how to achieve processing of documents within a timely manner. Ellen
200 Reckhow suggested that the MPO Board have an increased role during the upcoming phase.

201 Katherine Eggleston discussed an agreement work plan, which would include agreements
202 between jurisdictions during the design phase to support construction. Katherine Eggleston stated that
203 additional agreements would involve support of the operations and maintenance of the system.
204 Katherine Eggleston discussed securing resolutions and support for moving forward with the project
205 concept for boards of all the affected local governments and major institutions, which would include
206 Duke University, RTP, and North Carolina State University (NCSU). Michael Parker suggested broadening
207 the definition of major institutions to include a wider range of private institutions. Katharine Eggleston
208 discussed that GoTriangle is the project sponsor for most of the outlined tasks, but will be supported by
209 the parties addressed in the MOU.

210 Katharine Eggleston discussed federal requirements in industry standards, such as wheelchair
211 access to commuter rail. Katharine Eggleston discussed engaging with NCRR to create buy-in for detailed
212 corridor screening and obtaining field surveys. Katharine Eggleston examined land availability for park-
213 and-ride stations. Chair Wendy Jacobs, Ellen Reckhow, and Katharine Eggleston discussed integrating
214 multimodal access to the commuter rail stations. Chair Wendy Jacobs and Ellen Reckhow discussed
215 alternative solutions for potential shortages of parking access for the commuter rail.

216 Katharine Eggleston reviewed maintenance facilities and implementing project concurrence
217 plans. Katharine Eggleston and Michael Parker discussed the updated cost estimate and how cost will be
218 expressed related to the implementation scale and the resulting economy of cost. Ellen Reckhow, Chair
219 Wendy Jacobs, and Katharine Eggleston discussed the concept of equity within the MOU and the CRT
220 project. Michael Parker discussed the role of the governing boards, including the DCHC MPO, and other

221 stakeholders in oversight of the CRT project. Steve Schewel suggested reminding residents that the CRT
 222 project and other transit improvements were voted affirmatively by referendum. Vernetta Alston
 223 requested that GoTriangle update the MPO Board on how roles will be defined in upcoming planning
 224 meetings. Ellen Reckhow discussed the need for transparency. There was discussion that GoTriangle will
 225 present information to the MPO Board every other month.

226 Michael Parker made a motion to adopt the resolution to program an additional \$2,235,000 for
 227 the next phase of study for commuter rail. Renee Price seconded the motion. The motion passed
 228 unanimously.

229 **11. Memorandum of Understanding for Next Phase of Study on Commuter Rail Transit**
 230 **Katharine Eggleston, GoTriangle**
 231 **Aaron Cain, LPA Staff**

232 This action item was discussed with the previous action item. Please see above.

233 Ellen Reckhow made a motion to adopt the GTCR MOU. Renee Price seconded the motion. The
 234 motion passed unanimously.

235 **REPORTS:**

236 **12. Report from the MPO Board Chair**
 237 **Wendy Jacobs, Board Chair**

238 Chair Wendy Jacobs stated that there are ongoing plans to coordinate a meeting to determine
 239 how NCDOT is choosing projects that were placed on the list of suspended projects.

240 **13. Report from the Technical Committee Chair**
 241 **Nish Trivedi, TC Chair**

242 There was no additional report from Nish Trivedi.

243 **14. Report from LPA Staff**
 244 **Felix Nwoko, Andy Henry, LPA Staff**

245 Aaron Cain thanked Bergen Watterson for providing a location to hold the DCHC MPO Board
 246 Meeting due to a malware issue at the City of Durham. Aaron Cain stated that the COVID 19 virus may
 247 cause disruption for the April 8 DCHC MPO Board Meeting.

248 Andy Henry stated that the 15-501 Corridor Study is ongoing. Andy Henry added that there are
249 some design issues in Chapel Hill, which were highlighted by Pam Hemminger. Andy Henry added that
250 the design alternatives are scheduled to be finished by mid-March 2020, and will then be discussed
251 with Chapel Hill and NCDOT Division 7.

252 **15. NCDOT Report**

253 David Keilson, Division 5, stated that the East End Connector project (U-0071) is progressing,
254 but the southbound ramp onto NC 147 will be closed for one month starting March 11, and there will
255 be weekend lane closures. Ellen Reckhow asked about the configuration of NC 147 merging onto I-40.
256 David Keilson responded that different configurations are being studied, but a final decision has not yet
257 been made.

258 David Keilson stated that utilities are being relocated for the Old Chapel Hill Road project (EB-
259 4707A), and construction is anticipated to start in April 2020.

260 Pat Wilson, Division 7, stated that there was no additional report.

261 Bryan Kluchar, Division 8, stated that there was no additional report.

262 Julie Bogle, Transportation Planning Division, stated that the NC Moves 2050 Plan is currently
263 in its future needs phase. Julie Bogle described a handout sheet, which provided information regarding
264 investment needs, and the schedule for future phases of the NC Moves 2050 Plan. Ellen Reckhow
265 requested information regarding committee recommendations for NCDOT funding options.

266 John Grant, NCDOT Traffic Operations, stated that there was no further report.

267 **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

268 **16. Recent News, Articles, and Updates**

269 The DCHC MPO Board and attendees sang *Happy Birthday* to Mayor Steve Schewel.

270 **ADJOURNMENT:**

271 There being no further business before the DCHC MPO Board, the meeting was adjourned at
272 11:06 a.m.